

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Press Conference

of

HONORABLE ROBERT S. McNAMARA

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The Pentagon

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SECRETARY McNAMARA: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I have no announcements to make today. Therefore, I am ready to answer your questions.

QUESTION. Mr. Secretary, I would like to know first, do you want these censors to testify on the Hill and second, do you think you can get away with your refusal without invoking executive privilege?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: In the beginning, let me say that I strongly believe in the right of Congress to investigate the operations of the Executive Branch. A corollary of that belief, of course, is my equally strong belief that the Executive Branch must cooperate fully, has a responsibility to cooperate fully with the Congress during those investigations.

I believe we have done so. I think the record will show that our cooperation exceeds that of any executive department faced with a similar set of circumstances.

We have supplied to the committee over 1,500 speeches plus several hundred other documents. We have given the names of the 14 reviewers responsible for the review of these documents. We have allowed the committee to interrogate those reviewers in private without members or representatives of the Defense Department being present.

With this increase of 100,000 men and with the increase of some 45 percent in the number of combat ready Army divisions, it seemed appropriate to us to realign the objectives of the Reserve and Guard units; first, to place additional emphasis on combat readiness. To do this, it is necessary to increase the manning levels of certain of the units, to increase the amount of equipment that is authorized for them and made available to them, to improve their training, and to add what are known as technicians but what are 100 percent full time employees for training and logistics support purposes.

By these additions of personnel, equipment and trainers, we will substantially raise their readiness, reduce the period of time required prior to deployment of those individuals to combat.

Associated with this adjustment increasing emphasis on the high priority units will be the personnel and structure of lower priority units. There will be a shift of personnel from low priority to high priority units, thereby increasing the readiness of those units.

There would be a net reduction of about 30,000 men in the total of the Reserve and Guard forces. This 30,000-man reduction in the Reserve and Guard is being more than offset by the 100,000 man increase in the strength of the permanent Army. I think this answers your question.

QUESTION. Mr. Secretary, are you alarmed at the growth of Cuba's military strength and do you intend to do anything about it?

SECRETARY McNAMARA. I think it is important to recognize that the Soviet Union and its satellites have over a period of months shipped large quantities of military materiel into Cuba. Beyond that I can't say anything as to the future.

QUESTION. Mr. Secretary, the President two weeks ago indicated a greatly increased emphasis in the offing on sub-limited warfare, guerilla and counter-guerilla activities. Can you give us a rundown of some of the steps that have been taken in this field and the directions for the future?